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Dr. Van Horne says drugs may affect future health and thinking

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DR. VAN HORNE SAYS DRUGS
MAY AFFECT FUTURE
HEALTH AND THINKING

MISSOULA, Mont.--

Dr. Robert L. Van Horne, dean of the School of Pharmacy at the University of Montana, said in a recent interview that excessive use of marijuana and other drugs may have permanent negative effects on clear thinking.

The 53-year-old Malvern, Iowa, native is one of seven persons appointed to Montana's new 14-member Commission on Alcohol and Drug Dependence by Gov. Forrest H. Anderson, effective this past July 7. Dr. Van Horne, a former resident of Council Bluffs, Iowa, will serve on the commission for a six-year period.

The Montana pharmacy dean said excessive use of marijuana typically "befuddles" thinking. He also emphasized the unpredictable effects excessive drug usage can bring.

Dr. Van Horne said it is impossible to prove that permanently impaired thinking is caused by use of marijuana because "the drug user's thinking might have changed anyway."

The dean said that, in his opinion, LSD is the most harmful drug if taken excessively. Next are the depressants, such as the barbiturates and heroin. Then/^{come}the stimulants, such as "speed," dexedrine and benzedrine. All taken excessively would cause dependency, he said.

He said some drugs, even when used excessively, do not prevent an individual from functioning adequately in society. However, he emphasized that LSD definitely does impair social functioning.

Dr. Van Horne said the main reason persons should avoid excessive drug-taking is that the long-range effects on health and thinking are unpredictable. The financial cost of the particular drug to the individual is a secondary consideration, he said.

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Dr. Van Horne said that as a member of the State Commission on Alcohol and Drug Dependence he would like to see preventive measures taken through education, enforcement and laws, provision of rehabilitative agencies, and development of proper attitudes toward health practices and social problems.

"Preventive education about drug characteristics should begin in grade school," he said. "It is too late to begin in high school." He added that informing the public will help to eliminate the problem.

Dr. Van Horne does not believe in punishing persons who abuse themselves with drugs. "Drug addiction is usually an expression of a deeper problem," he said. "Information and rehabilitation are the answers."

"The important thing is to channel the victim's actions in fruitful directions and to punish the real offenders, the drug pushers and salesmen," Dr. Van Horne said.

Purpose of the Montana commission is to encourage treatment and control programs and prevention of drug and alcohol dependence in Montana.

Dr. Van Horne received his three degrees at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa--his Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy in 1941, his Master of Science degree in 1947 and his Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1949. While at Iowa, he was a Fellow for the American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education from 1946 to 1949.

He was an instructor in pharmacy at Iowa and subsequently became assistant professor and associate professor there. In 1956 he came to the University of Montana to assume the deanship of the UM pharmacy school.

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